

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (EPSOM & EWELL)****DATE:** 9TH DECEMBER 2013**LEAD OFFICER:** NICK HEALEY, AREA TEAM MANAGER (NE)**SUBJECT:** PROPOSED NEW CYCLE ROUTE IN WATERLOO ROAD**DIVISION:** EPSOM TOWN AND DOWNS & EPSOM WEST**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Officers have completed the detailed design for a new cycle route in Waterloo Road, Epsom. In September 2013 Committee deferred its decision on whether to implement this new cycle route, to facilitate investigation of a number of concerns and whether any alternative scheme could be implemented instead.

This report draws on CCTV survey evidence to answer the concerns raised and explains the background to the proposed scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Epsom & Ewell) is asked to:**

- (i) Authorise the creation of the shared surface needed to allow cyclists to cycle on a section of the western footway in Waterloo Road, to facilitate delivery of a new cycle route connecting to Epsom Station (see Annex A).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The proposed new cycle route would provide a missing link in the Epsom and Ewell Cycle Network, connecting Epsom Station to the extensive existing network to the north of the Borough. The proposed scheme would improve road safety in Waterloo Road for all highway users. There would be no significant negative impact arising directly out of the proposed scheme.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 For some years Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and Surrey County Council have been developing a comprehensive network of cycle routes across the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. Wherever possible these routes have been provided to meet the needs of the average cyclist. Therefore the network includes shared footways, segregated footways, routes through parks and open spaces, and routes along quiet residential roads.
- 1.2 Recent market research elsewhere in Surrey suggests that provision of a continuous route from A to B is vital to an average cyclist's decision to cycle, rather than drive, to their destination. A break in a cycle route at a main road, or a difficult junction, can form an absolute barrier to the average cyclist choosing to cycle, or the average parent allowing their children to cycle.

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- 1.3 Provision of a cycle network that is accessible to the average cyclist is key to encouraging drivers to cycle. The long term aim is to reduce dependence on the private car as the first choice mode of transport, and thereby reduce congestion in Epsom and Ewell.
- 1.4 A new cycle route is proposed for Waterloo Road, to fulfil the terms of a s106 agreement arising out of the redevelopment of Epsom Station. This new route was first conceived in 1997 as part of the first Local Transport Plan (LTP1) to form a key link in the greater Epsom and Ewell cycle network. The redevelopment of Epsom Station, which was mooted even before 1997, was considered at the time to be the primary opportunity to implement the proposed new route.
- 1.5 Following the completion of the redevelopment of Epsom Station, this new route was considered for formal approval by Committee in September 2013, and is included in Annex A. Committee deferred its decision on whether to implement this new cycle route, to facilitate investigation of two concerns:
 - The proposed new cycle route would include widening the existing footway on the western side of Waterloo Road, which would prevent the southbound queue in Waterloo Road forming in double-file underneath the railway bridge. Members were concerned that this would result in unacceptable congestion in Waterloo Road.
 - Members were concerned at the risk of conflict between pedestrians and cyclists on the proposed new shared surface.
- 1.6 Committee also asked officers to explore whether there are any alternative schemes that could be considered instead, that would fulfil the terms of the s106 agreement.

2. ANALYSIS:

Missing Link

- 2.1 There is a comprehensive network of cycle routes to the north of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. For example the Hogsmill Path connects Ewell Village to the Borough Boundary with Kingston Upon Thames. There are links to the residential developments that now occupy the sites of the former hospitals. These routes funnel southwards to an off-road route between Pound Lane and Horsley Close, which terminates approximately 130m to the north of Station Approach.
- 2.2 Cyclists wishing to proceed southwards to Epsom Station or Epsom Town Centre then have a number of options:
 - Dismount and walk their bicycle along the narrow footways underneath the railway bridge in Waterloo Road;
 - Cross Waterloo Road and cycle with traffic to Station Approach;
 - Cycle along the footway, which is unlawful.
- 2.3 This missing link is a significant barrier to the average cyclist choosing to cycle to Epsom Station or Epsom Town Centre from the north of the Borough.

CCTV Survey Evidence

- 2.4 CCTV surveys were undertaken on Wednesday 6th November 2013 for a twelve hour period to observe the section of Waterloo Road between Station Approach and Horsley Close. This evidence was presented to Members at an informal briefing in November 2013.

Congestion in Waterloo Road

- 2.5 The CCTV surveys showed that for most of the day, the southbound queue in Waterloo Road, on the approach to Station Approach, forms in single file. For approximately one hour during the morning peak, and then sporadically at other times during the day, the queue forms in double file to varying degrees.
- 2.6 During the busiest times during the morning peak, the queue formed in double file continuously from Station Approach to Horsley Close, but at no time was the queue observed to form in double-file around the bend and further north than Horsley Close. At other times during the morning peak, the queue formed partly in single file and partly in double-file, depending on the number of vehicles in that section of the road, and partly on the alignment and width of individual vehicles.
- 2.7 The controlling factor for the delay experienced by motorists in Waterloo Road was observed to be the Spread Eagle junction. Regardless of whether the queue in Waterloo Road formed in single or double-file, the number of vehicles moving south was determined by the number of vehicles in the section of Waterloo Road between the Spread Eagle junction and Station Approach. On several occasions this section was full, and vehicles could not proceed southwards even when they were given a green light at the Station Approach junction.
- 2.8 The Spread Eagle junction currently has a very lengthy all-red pedestrian phase, to cater for the long distances pedestrians need to walk to cross the road at this location. Furthermore at busy times the traffic signals at the Spread Eagle junction prioritise the A24. What this means is that at busy times, the time given to the Waterloo Road arm of the junction is minimised, resulting in delay to motorists approaching on Waterloo Road.
- 2.9 In practice if the proposed scheme were to be implemented, and drivers in Waterloo Road constrained to a single file queue, during the morning peak this queue would be longer than it is currently, but the overall delay experienced by drivers would be unchanged, as the delay is determined by the operation of the Spread Eagle junction.

Conflict between cyclists and pedestrians

- 2.10 During the twelve hours of the CCTV survey there were approximately 300 cycle journeys in Waterloo Road, between Station Approach and Horsley Close. This equates to approximately 6% of all vehicle movements in this section during the course of the survey.
- 2.11 Cyclists were observed cycling on the existing narrow footways, and also on the carriageway. Those cyclists on the existing narrow footways did not come into conflict with pedestrians. That said the existing width of the footways means there is only room for two way movement of pedestrians, cyclists, or a mix of pedestrians and cyclists, in single file. The widening of the footway proposed would enable pedestrian and all cycle movements to coexist comfortably on the proposed shared surface. The respective numbers of both

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groups would need to increase substantially before there was any significant risk of conflict.

- 2.12 There are numerous existing shared surfaces within the Epsom and Ewell cycle network that are of equivalent width to the proposed new facility in Waterloo Road. For example the route behind the Ebbisham Centre connecting Waterloo Road to East Street, the route connecting Waterloo Road to Pound Lane, the many routes through parks and open spaces within the Borough, and the route alongside Longmead Road. There is no evidence of any safety concerns arising out of any of these existing routes.
- 2.13 Taking together the evidence from the CCTV survey and the operation of the many existing shared surfaces in Epsom and Ewell, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposed new facility in Waterloo Road would give rise to conflict between cyclists and pedestrians. The proposed scheme has been subject to Road Safety Audit, and no such concerns were identified.

Observed road safety issues

- 2.14 The CCTV survey revealed a number of undesirable behaviours in Waterloo Road, which result in a number of safety risks.
- 2.15 The existing carriageway is not wide enough for a double-file queue to form unless all drivers in the queue align their vehicles very carefully. More often than not vehicles in the second lane of a double-file queue straddled the centre line. Vehicles straddling the centre line obstructed large vehicles travelling north, and create a risk of head on conflict with north bound traffic.
- 2.16 The perceived opportunity to form a double-file queue results in competitive driver behaviour. For example southbound drivers were observed to overtake stationary vehicles on the bend near Horsley Close, crossing the centre line to do so, but with limited visibility of whether the road ahead would be clear. For example southbound drivers were observed overtaking large or poorly aligned vehicles across centre line in face of oncoming traffic. These overtaking manoeuvres create a risk of head on conflict with northbound traffic.
- 2.17 Drivers were observed to choose their lane in a double-file queue simply to gain an advantage in the queue, or to gain advantage on the approach to the Spread Eagle junction. Drivers were observed changing lanes in the double file queue to further this advantage. This weaving behaviour creates a risk of conflict between vehicles, especially as drivers' attention is focussed on a perceived advantage ahead, rather than the movement of nearby vehicles and other road users.
- 2.18 When the queue forms in double-file there is no room for cyclists to filter past the queue on the correct side of the road. Consequently southbound cyclists were observed cycling down the wrong side of the road rather than waiting in the queue. This creates a risk of head on conflict between cyclists and northbound vehicles.
- 2.19 Reducing the carriageway width to constrain drivers to a single file queue would eliminate most of the observed undesirable driver, and reduce the risk of conflict arising from this undesirable behaviour. Providing a shared surface for cyclists would provide a facility for cyclists segregated from traffic, and would reduce the temptation for cyclists to put themselves in danger.

Planning constraints

- 2.20 The proposed cycle route has been designed to fulfil the terms of a s106 agreement arising out of the redevelopment of Epsom Station. A sum of £50,000 has been contributed “toward cycle, pedestrian and public transport facilities in Waterloo Road”.
- 2.21 Officers have explored whether any alternative scheme could be implemented with these monies in consultation with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Planning Service. As Local Planning Authority Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is the lead signatory to the s106 agreement.
- 2.22 To the north of Horsley Close, Waterloo Road has shops on the northwest side and residential accommodation on the southeast side. To implement any cycle, pedestrian or public transport improvements in this section would necessitate removal of the existing parking in front of the shops.
- 2.23 To the south of Station Approach, plans are being developed in the context of Plan E for substantial improvements to ease traffic flow through Epsom Town Centre. This may well include a wholesale remodelling of the section of Waterloo Road between Station Approach and the Spread Eagle junction. Therefore any investment in advance of the Plan E Major Scheme could prove abortive.
- 2.24 Therefore officers are unable to identify any alternative scheme in Waterloo Road that would satisfy the terms of the s106 agreement. This means that if Committee decides not to proceed with the proposed scheme, there is a significant risk that the £50,000 would need to be repaid to the developer of Epsom Station.

Suggested improvements

- 2.25 At the Member briefing in November 2013 Members made a number of suggestions:
- That the streetlighting underneath the railway bridges be improved as part of the scheme, including new streetlights underneath the bridge and repositioned streetlights to avoid unnecessary obstruction of the new cycle route;
 - That a ramp be included to enable cyclists travelling north from the Spread Eagle junction along Waterloo Road to join the proposed new cycle route;
 - That signs be installed to encourage cyclists and pedestrians to show due respect to each other when using the proposed new shared surface, similar to the existing similar signs in parks and open spaces in Epsom and Ewell;
 - That information be provided in advance of the construction of the proposed scheme, and also during construction of the proposed scheme, to explain the background to the scheme and answer some of the questions that are likely to be posed by residents and road users in this location.
- 2.26 All these suggestions would be included in the scheme, were Committee to authorise its implementation.

Plan E – proposed capacity enhancement at the Spread Eagle junction

- 2.27 The main cause of delay to southbound vehicles in Waterloo Road is the Spread Eagle junction. As part of the Plan E Major Scheme a substantial overhaul of this junction is being developed. This is being designed to increase capacity at the Spread Eagle junction, which in turn would lead to reduced delays in Waterloo Road for southbound traffic.
- 2.28 Officers anticipate that the net result of the proposed new cycle route in Waterloo Road, together with the Plan E Major Scheme, would be increased queue length in Waterloo Road at the busiest times of day, but reduced overall delay experienced by drivers.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Committee may choose either to construct the proposed scheme, or risk forfeiting the £50,000 s106 contribution relating to it.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 If Committee were to approve implementation of the proposed scheme, officers would provide information in advance of the construction of the proposed scheme, and also during construction of the proposed scheme, to explain the background to the scheme and answer some of the questions that are likely to be posed by residents and road users in this location.
- 4.2 Local bus service operators have been consulted on account of there being a bus stop within the extent of the proposed cycle route. The operators were concerned that bus passengers waiting at the bus stop, or embarking or disembarking from a bus, would be at risk of conflict with cyclists on the proposed new cycle route. They indicated that if the proposed scheme were to go ahead, they would monitor the situation.
- 4.3 Boarding data for this stop suggests that there are never more than a small handful of passengers waiting at this bus stop at any given time. CCTV survey evidence suggests that cyclists are already using the footway that is proposed to be widened, which includes cycling past the bus stop. Therefore if the proposed scheme were to be implemented, there would be considerably more space by the bus stop, which should provide for bus passengers to wait comfortably without risk of conflict with passing pedestrians or cyclists.
- 4.4 The Epsom and Ewell Cycling Action Group has been consulted and provided the following statement:

We write to record our support for the proposed widening of the west side pavement under the Waterloo Road bridge so as to provide for cyclists. We have long requested improvements for the unsatisfactory conditions for cyclists there, so we are very pleased that funding for improvements under Development Management Policies Document Policy DM7 is now available. The west pavement, because it is narrow and dark, produces 'conflict' between pedestrians and northbound child and non-confident cyclists, using the pavement to avoid speedy traffic, and southbound cyclists, particularly from Hazon Way/Court Rec to the Station, cycling rather than walking their cycles under the bridge. The infrastructure in this area makes it difficult to find an easy solution to provide for cyclists, In our discussions over the years with

the County's engineer we know that lengthy observation and research has been done to find a solution acceptable for all.

We are sure that widening the west side pavement to 3.5 metres (wider than the norm for shared used paths) will certainly reduce the 'conflicts' between pedestrians and cyclists, who already cycle along that pavement. Widening will improve conditions for both pedestrians and cyclists. We would also mention that our Group, during discussions on the Ebbisham Centre redevelopment, lobbied for a narrow footpath along the south side of the railway be widened to cater for cyclists between Waterloo Road and East Street. This path is now wide enough for both pedestrians and cyclists, so we are sure that a widened west side pavement will similarly be wide enough to avoid 'conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

- 4.5 The Epsom and Ewell Cycling Action Group also undertook a count of cyclists and pedestrians underneath the railway bridges in Waterloo Road during the morning of Thursday 10th October, between 7:45am and 9:15am. A total of 74 cyclists were counted, of which approximately 60% used the footway.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The financial implications of this paper are detailed in section 2 above.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 It is an objective of Surrey Highways to treat all users of the public highway equally and with understanding.
- 6.2 Provision of a high quality cycle network improves accessibility to employment and education opportunities, and local amenities, to those in the community who have limited access to a motor vehicle.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 It is for the Local Committee to decide whether the proposed scheme would be beneficial to the broad community who would benefit from the implementation of a missing link in Epsom and Ewell cycle network.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Provision of a comprehensive cycle network can encourage sustainable transport choices, which would result in less congestion, reduced emissions, and improved health for those who choose to walk or cycle rather than drive.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The proposed new cycle route in Waterloo Road would provide a missing link that connects Epsom Station and Epsom Town Centre to a comprehensive network of cycle routes to the north of the Borough.
- 9.2 CCTV survey evidence demonstrates that the delay to vehicles in Waterloo Road would not be affected by the proposed new cycle route, as the delay is dictated by the operation of the Spread Eagle junction.

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- 9.3 The width of the proposed new shared cycle route is equivalent to other highly successful shared cycle routes elsewhere in Epsom and Ewell, for example the route behind the Ebbisham Centre. Therefore the likelihood of conflict between pedestrians and cyclists is minimal.
- 9.4 CCTV survey evidence suggests that a number of highly undesirable behaviours could be eliminated were the proposed scheme to be implemented, which would improve safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 If Committee were to authorise the implementation of the proposed new cycle route, works would commence in January 2014 for approximately 4 weeks.

Contact Officer: Nick Healey, Area Team Manager (NE)

Consulted: None.

Annexes: 1

Sources/background papers: None.
